BOOK REVIEWS


The Association for Research in Ophthalmology of the United States sponsored a Symposium on the anatomy, physiology, biochemistry, and immunology of the lens, a vast and rapidly growing subject of immense interest. The papers appeared in the Association’s journal, Investigative Ophthalmology, in August, 1965, and those who are not subscribers to this journal will be delighted that they have now appeared in book form and have thus been made generally available. The individual papers have already been abstracted in Ophthalmic Literature; suffice it to say that they are of a high standard, excellently illustrated, and give a complete and up-to-date account of our present knowledge of the problems involved. It is to be hoped that the Association will soon arrange another symposium concerning itself particularly with deviations from normal that lead to the development of cataract.


This volume summarizes the colloquium of the Jules Gonin Club on detachment of the retina held in Lausanne in 1961. This is a rapidly changing subject and it is a pity that the publication of the Proceedings has been delayed for four years. Nevertheless, they are well worth reading as being the views of some of the foremost authorities in the world on this subject. Most aspects of the subject were reviewed: the pathology, biomicroscopic methods of examination, the part played by the vitreous, and the factor of genetics occupy the first part of the volume, and the remainder is devoted to a discussion of the various new surgical techniques, particularly coagulation, synthetic scleral implants and replacement of the vitreous, the results likely to be obtained from their application, and the possible complications which may arise unexpectedly or from avoidable errors in technique. There is no doubt that good results may now be obtained in cases which would previously have been considered hopeless, but disasters can be avoided only by a thorough knowledge of these new techniques and an appreciation of their limitations.


The operation of cataract extraction, in spite of its venerability, remains the most important and technically the most intriguing of ophthalmic operations. Each surgeon develops his own combination of techniques for extraction of the lens and it is therefore important for the trainee surgeon to work under as many chiefs as possible. There are numerous text-books of eye surgery, most of which give objective accounts of the various operative methods available, but some advocate new and personal techniques. This atlas, written by an experienced teacher of ophthalmic surgery and illustrated by both line and pen and wash pictures, presents the techniques that the author has personally found the most satisfactory.

The book opens with an excellent chapter on the pre-operative care of the patient, emphasizing the great importance of the humanity of the doctor towards his patient before, during, and after the operation. The text is short but clear and to the point. The instruments, however, are not individually identified in the text and it would therefore have been helpful if they had been illustrated in their entirety. Technical procedures are clearly described, especially the insertion of sutures, but the beginner may find it a little disconcerting when he reads of certain sophisticated procedures described as easy. Several methods of lens extraction are described, including cryo-extraction and zonulolysis. It is not, however, the purpose of this book to go into detailed discussion on the pros and cons of the various methods. The management of dislocated lenses and congenital cataracts is mentioned and some operative and post-operative complications are described with sensible and modern accounts of their treatment. This book will be a very useful guide to the young ophthalmic surgeon being trained in the author’s eye department, but is probably too individualistic, dogmatic, and expensive to be of great general use.